

COUNTY OF ERIE,
NEW YORK

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- Legislature sets 2012 meeting schedule.
- County accepts cost-saving grants.
- HEAP Outreach planned.

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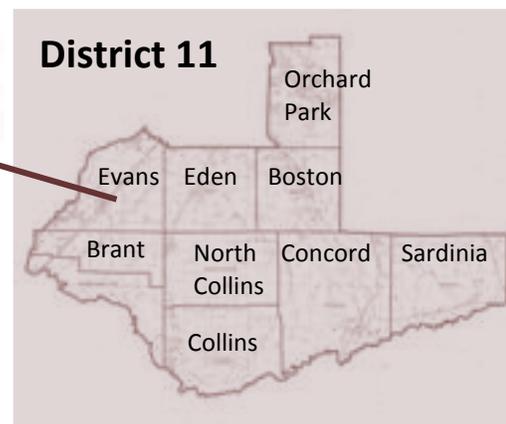
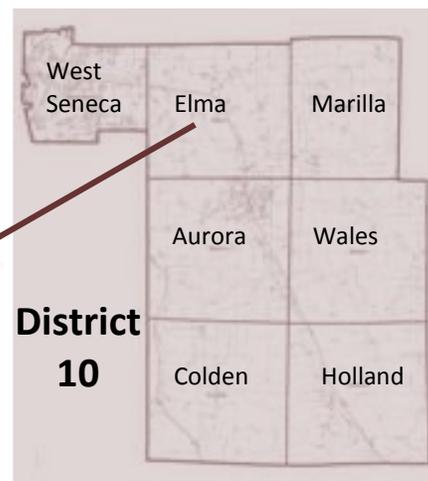
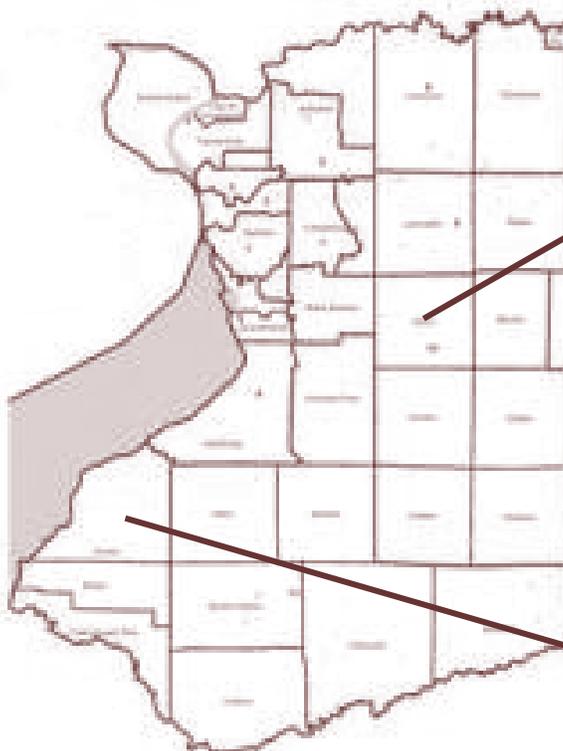
News from Legislator

John J. Mills



WINTER 2011 - 2012

New Legislature Districts take effect



The new 11-District Map will be implemented on Jan. 1, 2012 and places the most southern towns into one of two districts - 10 and 11.

Maps available at www.erieboe.com

For the past six years, Legislator Mills has been proud to represent the towns and villages that made up District 13. But that District will just be a part of the Legislature's history.

On Jan. 1, 2012 the new 11-District Legislative map will go into effect. In November 2010, 83 percent of voters approved a referendum to downsize the Legislature from 15 to 11.

"The residents spoke loud and clear, and their wishes will be now be implemented," Legislator Mills said.

Reelected to a fourth term this past November, Legislator Mills will represent the new 11th District which includes, the towns of Orchard Park, Boston, Eden, Evans, Brant, North Collins, Collins, Concord and Sardinia, as well as the villages of

Angola, Farnham, Gowanda, North Collins, Orchard Park and Springville

"Geographically it is the largest district, and all the towns have similar needs, mainly infrastructure maintenance," said Legislator Mills. "My focus will be providing safe roadways and bridges, as well as ensuring all needed services are provided."

(Story continues - see page 3)

2012 budget, Legislative schedule set



The first session of 2012 will be held Jan. 5.

The Erie County Legislature has adopted the 2012 budget; a \$1 billion spending plan that does not raise the tax rate.

Legislator Mills commented that the budget is a business plan for the County and reflects a compromise among the Republican and Democratic legislators, as well as County Executive-elect Mark Poloncarz.

The Legislature will hold its first session of the 2012-13 term on Thursday, Jan. 5,

which is the annual reorganizational meeting. At that time a new chairperson of the Legislature will be named. Legislator Barbara Miller-Williams held the seat for the past two years but did not win re-election to the Legislature in November.

The Legislature's 2012 schedule is as follows: Jan. 26; Feb. 16 and 23; March 15 and 29; April 5 and 19; May 10 and 24; June 7 and 21; July 12 and 19; Sept. 13 and 27; Oct. 11

and 25; Nov. 8 and 29; and Dec. 6 and 20. The Legislature is in recess during August. Sessions are held in the Legislative Chambers, 92 Franklin St., Fourth Floor, Buffalo.

Session agendas are always available on the Legislature's Website, found at www.erie.gov/legislature. The Website also includes minutes from previous meetings, district maps, and committee reports.

"This grant will allow Erie County to install a system that has great environmental benefits, and saves taxpayer dollars."
- said Legislator Mills

Environmental grant will reuse rainwater

Legislator Mills announces that the County has accepted a grant that will reuse 2 million gallons of rainwater and reduce damage from stormwater flooding and pollutants. During a recent session, the Legislature approved a \$626,000 state grant from the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation that will commence the Western New

York Stormwater Coalition: Rainwater Harvesting Installation Project.

The grant funds will be used to install large rainwater cisterns at the Erie County Aurora Highway Garage and Village of Orchard Park Highway Garage. The rainwater collected in the large barrels will be used for street sweeping, vegetation watering, truck cleaning, and

similar outdoor projects.

"This grant will allow Erie County to install a system that has great environmental benefits, and saves taxpayer dollars. The project will decrease the amount of stormwater discharge and reduce flooding in the area, as well the amount of pollutants entering local waterways," Legislator Mills said.

Funding benefits public safety improvements

Necessary funding for a new state-of-the-art landing pad for the Erie County Sheriff's helicopter was approved during a recent Erie County Legislature session, Legislator Mills announced. The new \$31,000 landing pad will provide a safe takeoff and landing surface for the Sheriff's "Air-1" helicopter, which is piloted by Captain Kevin Caffery and Tactical Flight

Officer Arthur Litzinger and located in the Town of Evans. The new 'HELIWAGON' is a remote controlled takeoff and landing dolly that will replace the 40-year-old dolly currently being used.

Captain Caffery commented that this new equipment will dramatically decrease the amount of time it takes him to get airborne and respond to

the various requests that are continuously made for AIR-1. Captain Caffery said "seconds count" in search and rescue operations and sometimes are the difference in saving victims lives.

Legislator Mills also announced that the lease agreement to house Air-1 in Evans was recently approved, ensuring Air-1 is available to respond.



The new landing pad will make take off and landing safer, and more efficient, for the operators of Air-1.

Legislator Mills sponsors resolution to save \$50 million statewide

Legislator Mills sponsored a resolution urging New York State leaders to implement a schedule calling for only two New York State primaries next year and save taxpayers millions of dollars. The item was approved during the Legislature’s Dec. 8, 2011 session and a copy sent to Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

NYS could potentially hold three primary elections in 2012, one each for: president, congressional offices, and state offices. The resolution is in response to the U.S. Department of Justice’s request to a federal judge to order the state to move its congressional primary to no later than Aug. 18, in order to comply

with a federal law requiring absentee ballots be sent to members of the military no less than 45 days prior to the Nov. 6, 2012 general election. The August primary is in addition to the April 24 primary election for president, which is set by NYS law.

To date, NYS leaders have not imposed a new schedule that would change its primary, held in September.

“I have asked my colleagues in the county legislature to support this resolution and let our state leaders know that we oppose holding three separate primary elections next year. Locally, paying for three primary elections would cause a

large deficit in Erie County’s Board of Elections’ budget,” said Legislator Mills. “The State Board of Elections has estimated that the total cost to the state, per primary, is approximately \$50 million. We simply can’t allow the taxpayers to bear the burden of three primary elections when logistically we could merge the state and federal primaries into one.”

Legislator Mills added that the elective process must be respected and all laws adhered to as to ensure the public is allowed every opportunity to participate. In doing so, he expects state elected officials to be mindful of taxpayers’ money and set a schedule to reflect that.

HEAP Outreach scheduled in OP

Legislator Mills announces that a Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Outreach will be held on **Monday, Feb. 6** at Orchard Park Municipal Building, 4295 South Buffalo Street. Interviews will begin at 9 a.m. and continue until 4 p.m. Doors open at 8:30am. All applicants will be interviewed.

HEAP is a federally funded program to assist Erie County residents with their heating bills. The HEAP

outreach will be administered by the Erie County Departments of Social Services and Senior Services and is open to all income eligible households.

Applicants are requested to bring the following documentation to the outreach: one (1) form of identification for all household members (birth certificates, license, Social Security Card); proof of income received within the last 30

days for all household members (pay stubs, SS or pension award letters, proof of child support, rental income, unemployment benefits, worker’s comp., etc); and current heat and electric bills.

The Emergency HEAP component was tentatively scheduled to open Jan. 3, 2012. For additional information, call the HEAP Hotline, (716) 858-7644 .

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New Districts to take effect Jan. 1

(continued from page 1)

The towns of Aurora and Colden, which were part of District 13, have been redistricted into District 10 and will be represented by Legislator Joseph Lorigo.

“I look forward to the challenges of learning a new district and ask anyone that I can assist at any time to contact my Legislative office,” Mills added.



Legislator Mills and Legislator Lorigo tour East Aurora, which is located in the new District 10.



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Erie County's vision: Erie County will be a world-class community where People want to live, Businesses want to locate and Tourists want to visit.

Happy New Year to you and your family. I hope this year has been a healthy and happy one for you and your loved ones.

As the end of the calendar year comes to a close, it is only appropriate that we take a look back on the previous year. I am very proud of the year the Legislature had; implementing many cost-saving initiatives and approving Legislation that betters our community. I know we will be able to continue these successes in 2012.

Best wishes for a wonderful new year.

Sincerely,



Legislator Mills toured the new highway garage in East Concord with DPW employees. The new larger facility will improve efficiency and service.

Residents honored at Legislative Sessions

Members of the community are honored during each Legislative session. During the months of October, November and December the following individuals or groups were honored:

Beth Bolt, Town of Concord clerk, on her retirement after 32 years of service.

Springville Kiwanis Club on its 50th Anniversary.

Alice Wangelin, Town of Colden clerk, on her retirement after 25 years of service.

The Town of Eden on its forthcoming Bicentennial Celebration, 1912 - 2012.

Winter Activities Guide Available

The Erie County Parks System features a variety of free activities for visitors during the winter months.

The County Parks are great for downhill skiing in Emery Park, ice skating in Akron Falls Park, and sledding and tobogganing in Chestnut Ridge Park.

To learn more about the parks and what activities each has to offer, please request your free copy of the Winter Activities Guide by emailing Legislator Mills at john.mills@erie.gov or call 858-8850.